

February 3, 2016

## Marines honored for excellence in aviation

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From left to right, Marine Aviation Detachment and Marine Corps Aviation Association (MCAA) John Glenn Squadron Commanding Officer Col. Andre Mercier, NAVAIR Commander Vice Adm. Paul Grosklags, Michael A. Hough Acquisition Officer of the Year Maj. Gary Shill and Bell Helicopter representative Keith Danel during the 11th annual MCAA Aviation Acquisition Awards banquet Jan. 21. (U.S. Navy photo)

**NAVAL AIR STATION, PATUXENT RIVER, Md.** – The Marine Corps Aviation Association (MCAA) John Glenn Squadron presented excellence in aviation awards to three local Marines for demonstrated achievements in speed to the fleet, improving warfighter capabilities, and reducing cost per flight hour and repair time.

The following top honors were bestowed during the MCAA's 11th annual Acquisition Awards Banquet held Jan. 21 at Patuxent River:

### **2015 Lieutenant General Michael A. Hough Acquisition Officer of the Year**

Maj. Gary Shill, a native of Dayton, Ohio, was honored for his exceptional work as Navy and Marine Corps Small Tactical Unmanned Aircraft Systems (PMA-263) deputy integrated product team lead for Group 1 small unmanned aircraft systems and military Advanced Development team lead.

"This award is really a reflection of the team, and specifically the hard work they put into

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the program,” Shill said. “It means that ‘the system’ can and does work when pressed; that all of the various parts and pieces that make up the defense acquisition structure function best when we keep the pressure on to meet an objective.”

Shill managed the Small Unit Remote Scouting System program of record and Marine Corps Special Operations family of systems fielding, filling a critical intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capability gap at the unit level. He also led the efforts to procure and field an advanced payload for the RQ-21A Blackjack two years ahead of schedule and in time for its maiden shipboard deployment with the Marine Corps.

### **2015 John Glenn Test Pilot of the Year**

Maj. Don Underwood, originally from San Antonio, Texas, currently heads the H-1 helicopter department as a developmental test pilot for Air Test and Evaluation Squadron (HX) 21.

He was hailed for his support of the swashplate mis-rig testing; the radio frequency-guided Tube-launched Optically-tracked Wire-guided (TOW) missile project; and developmental test of the Intrepid Tiger II electronic warfare pod, which dramatically improved warfighting capabilities. Underwood’s efforts maximized current system capabilities and expedited delivery of new weapon systems to the fleet.

“It’s humbling to be the face of a team that consisted of so many spectacular people that made this award happen,” Underwood said. “Their accomplishments made these test projects successful.”

### **2015 Joyce/Leader Acquisition Staff Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year**

Staff Sgt. Anthony Collins was recognized for his exceptional skills and in-depth knowledge of acquisition logistics in his role of fleet liaison for the Marine Aviation Logistics Support Program 2 and avionics logistics chief for the V-22 Osprey Joint Program Office (PMA-275).

The support he provided for 14 V-22 avionics systems contributed to increased aircraft readiness and reduced cost per flight hour. Collins’ citation commended his application and mastery of AIRSpeed methodologies when supervising a project that helped reduce the CH-53 helicopter depot repair turn-around time by 50 percent, while also decreasing manpower requirements.

A native of Salem, New Jersey, Collins said he joined the Marine Corps because they offered him a chance to be more than just a citizen of the United States.

“I am grateful to have been a part of the events, projects and teams that allow our military to be successful,” Collins said. “It was an extreme honor to win this award.”

The three winners will compete for the national 2016 MCAA awards to be presented at the

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MCAA Symposium in New Bern, North Carolina, in May.



From left to right, Marine Aviation Detachment and Marine Corps Aviation Association (MCAA) John Glenn Squadron Commanding Officer Col. Andre Mercier, NAVAIR Commander Vice Adm. Paul Grosklags, John Glenn Test Pilot of the Year Maj. Donald Underwood and GE Aviation representative Harry Nahatis during the 11th annual MCAA Aviation Acquisition Awards banquet Jan. 21. (U.S. Navy photo)



From left to right, Marine Aviation Detachment and Marine Corps Aviation Association (MCAA) John Glenn Squadron Commanding Officer Col. Andre Mercier, NAVAIR Commander Vice Adm. Paul Grosklags, MCAA Joyce/Leader Acquisition Staff Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year Staff Sgt. Anthony Collins, Joyce/Leader Family Representative Jennifer Kuehn and Rolls Royce representative Tom Hills during the 11th annual MCAA Aviation Acquisition Awards banquet Jan. 21. (U.S. Navy photo)

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